Z:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

342 addition to this a mi-kat stands beside it. This is a broad
731 griddle, or flapper kind of thing, and its object is to beat out
355 the flame which may be caused by a spark lighting on the roof. In addition to this, in many parts of the country pots full of water are always kept in readiness on the tops of the houses, so that when the hour of danger comes, the householder may douse his roof, and so do the best for himself. In Mandalay, under native rule, some of the pa-gwets, and other outcasts, patrolled the streets all night, to watch for and prevent fires as much as possible.

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342 Another kind of roofing is wā-kat, a sort of flat tile-like construction, six feet long by two feet broad, made of coarse bamboo matting. Bamboos split in half down the centre and with the knots smoothed away, are also used. They are placed close together, with the hollow side upwards extending all the way down from the ridge to the eaves, and over these again are placed others with the rounded side up the whole presenting rather a curious appearance, but making a very serviceable roof and not nearly so dangerous as the leaf or grass thatching. The leaves of other trees are also occasionally used, but the simplicity and cheapness of the dani roof make it by far the most prevalent in the delta, as grass is elsewhere, notwithstanding its danger. In Rangoon and Maulmein, shingles, that is, small wooden slabs like slates, are being very generally introduced.

In the better class of houses the floors are made of planking, but poorer people have nothing better than a series of whole or split bamboos laid side by side on the cross beams and tied down with rattans. This is not very pleasant to walk on, and has the further disadvantage of being anything but cleanly, for the spaces between the bamboos offer an irresistible temptation to drop all litter and garbage on to the ground immediately underneath the house, and were it not for the pariah dogs the sanitary condition of the place would soon be very bad.

[565]

352 The house is thus simple enough in its character, but
177.35 the furniture is still more so. Intercourse with the English
369 has indeed brought many Burmans to indulge in English luxuries, and in many houses in Rangoon and the larger district towns, chandeliers, bookcases, pictures, and even

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When a fire occurred in the Golden City, it was usually a very big one and burned until it could find no more fuel. There were two reasons for this. The most obvious was, of course, that wood huts, with an inflammable roof like thin grass thatch, caught fire with the slightest spark; and there was nothing in the shape of a fire-engine, even in the palace. The second was very characteristic of a despotism, and vastly more disastrous. Immemorial tradition associated a conflagration with a revolution. When an attempt was to be made to seize the throne, the attention of the people and the soldiery was always diverted by incendiary fires. Therefore when a house took fire the people found nearest to it by the night watchmen were always arrested and made responsible for the catastrophe. As a natural consequence, the moment flames burst out, not only the inmates of the house, but all the neighbours took to their heels and ran, without incommoding themselves with even the smallest portion of their property. A few of the royal troops came down after a time and unroofed a house here and there, and perhaps even pulled down some altogether, but their efforts as amateur firemen were usually of the most feeble and futile description, and the flames went on till there was nothing more to burn. Next day the unhappy burnt-out people came back and made for themselves little hovels of bamboo matting among the charred posts till something better could be run up again. The neighbouring quarters contributed something to support them, or they got their meals at the monasteries, and in a few months all traces of the fire had disappeared, the same rickety huts with the old scanty store of wares rose up again, and the scorched leaves fell off the trees and were replaced by fresh green foliage.

The population of Mandalay was a very queer one. Of the Burmans the great majority were soldiers or hangers-on of the various great men about the court. The residuum was composed of a few honest tradesmen and a vast quantity of bad characters, broken agriculturists, gamblers, thieves from Lower Burma, and outlaws from all parts. The number of yellow-robed yahans was extraordinary. King Mindôn used to give alms to five thousand of them daily. The jars of rice were arranged in long rows on a platform erected

342 514 In U Myaing's house the lavatory is in the kitchen and is walled off with woven KYU (kind of fiber) mat. There is a hole cut open in the board flooring, and the area underneath this opening also is walled off with woven KYU. U Myaing and family did not take their meals in the kitchen but in the house proper.

361 368 346 The PHON-GYI KYAUNG or monastery is located further downstream from the village. It is a two storied brick building comprised of nine rooms, each 6 TAUNG square. Children are not taught here but learn their lessons at the government school. This school, which is on [872] [364] THA-GYI-BET side, teaches pupils up to the tenth standard. Below the PHON-GYI KYAUNG is the cemetery.

The houses in the village are separated one from the other by eight feet on each side. The rows of houses facing the river have porches on 342 both sides. U Myaing's house is typical of those found in the village - some may be more elaborate, some less. His house had been built only 435 six or seven years, and cost Rs. 3000/- at that time. There are no [651] accounts for each of the separate items and U Myaing does not remember. The land was free and they did not have to pay any revenue on it.

[366] Separate from the houses and on the riverside is a huge platform built [252] to process fish including the making of NGAPI. U Myaing had no land that [illegible] owned round the house, although he could use the land directly in front of the house for various purposes.

U Myaing describes his house as follows;

341 592 "It is a wooden house, made of wooden posts - a two storied structure. The roof is of slates. Walls are of SHI-NGA-MU wooden boards (boards 8 inches wide and about ¾ inch thick) and there are four rooms. Other people have similar houses. It is a LAY-HIN-KIN (a four-tree-house or a house which has four supporting poles across the front) and all seven of us live in the house. We drop a kitchen from the back and cook there. The kitchen has three windows at the back, with one door leading into the house. We all live together in three rooms. We keep bedrooms. (U Myaing is speaking of a sketch of the house here). This side is for visitors - there is a room for people who come to buy goods. The [366] old mother and the children live in one room and I and my wife in another with the smallest child. We eat in the front part of the house in one room at the foot of the sleeping place. There are nine 6 TAUNG rooms without partitions on each of the two floors. The sides of the house are enclosed with timber planks of IN wood, but the bedrooms are also partitioned off. It is very wide and roomy to live in. The floor is made of teak planks."

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
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178. SCENE IN THE PLAINS AT FLOOD-TIME.

keep the pasture green till March. By April the elephant-grass in the *Kwin* is dry and ready to burn like a prairie. Camp fires and cultivation fires spread, or the stump of a burning cheroot starts the fire, which runs through the *kaing* and the bamboo forest till it is stopped by a broad watercourse. In the hot weather the thatch and bamboo of the houses are as dry as tinder, and village fires are frequent. A hook and flapper on long bamboo poles are provided at every house to tear off the thatch and beat out the fire (No. 431). Water-pots are set along the roof-ridges, so that they only need to be overturned. But if a high wind is blowing, the burning thatch is carried across streets and creeks. The people can only save their movables and accept the situation, which they do with characteristic good humour. The religious buildings being more substantial, there is a better chance of extinguishing them when on fire. Religious merit is to be gained by [782] the effort; the whole village turns out with waterpots to quench the flames and slake the embers.

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179. THE IRAWADI AT PROME (p. 137).